

# **Canadians' Attitudes to Internet Voting**

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# **A CONTEXT OF ELECTORAL REFORM**

- **IN 2015 FEDERAL ELECTION, LIBERAL PARTY PROMISES IT IS “LAST ELECTION WITH SMP”**
- **AFTER VICTORY, REFORM DISCUSSION BROADENS TO INCLUDE VOTING METHODS.**
- **PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEE CONSIDERS MANY REFORMS, INCLUDING ELECTRONIC VOTING**

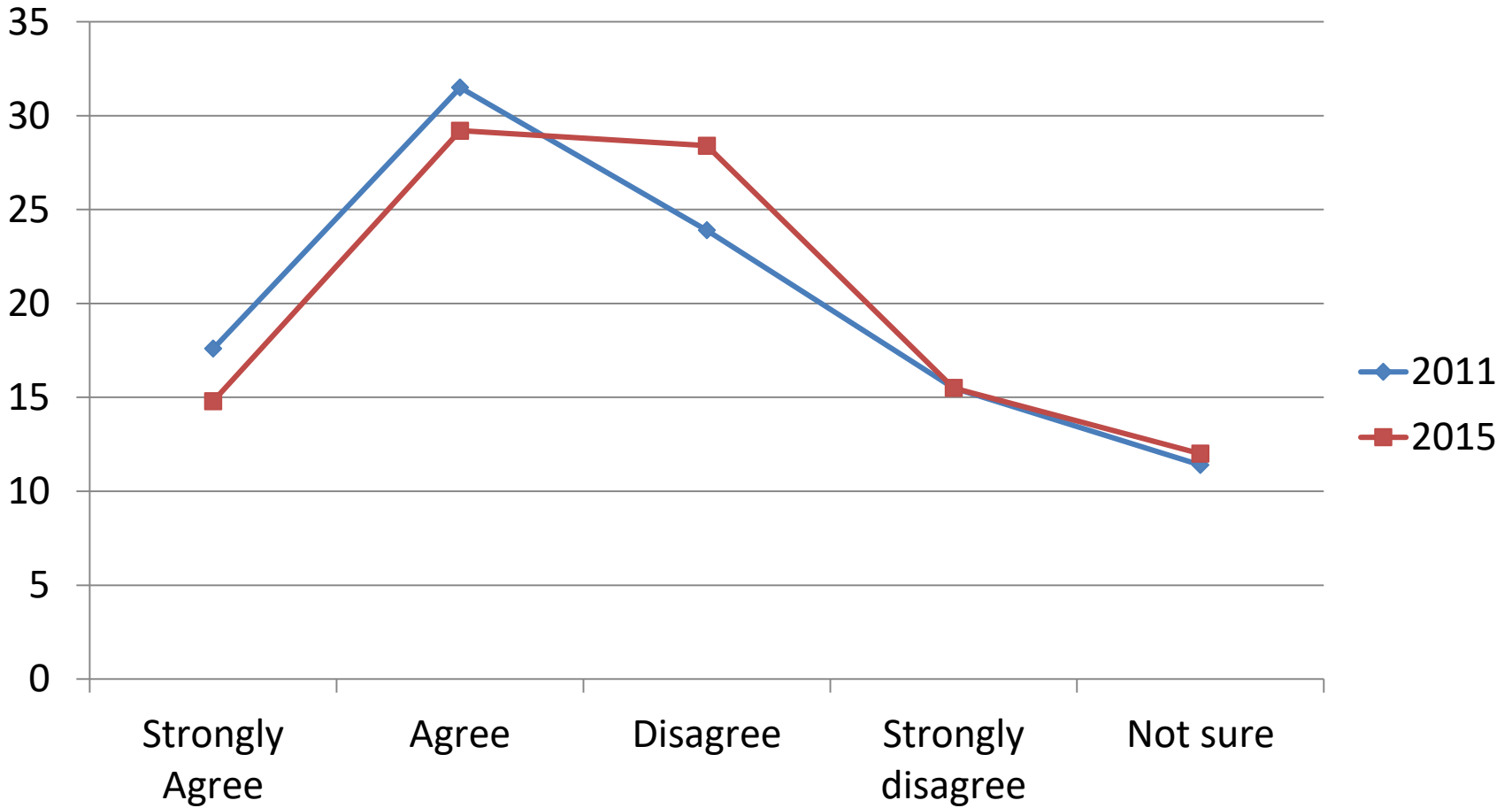
# **ELECTRONIC VOTING IN CANADA**

- **CONSIDERABLE INTERNET VOTING AT THE MUNICIPAL LEVEL IN ONTARIO AND NOVA SCOTIA, AND REFERENDUM IN PEI**
- **MORE THAN 230 BINDING ELECTIONS (170+ ONTARIO MUNICIPALITIES EXPECTED TO USE IN 2018)**
- **A LOT OF SMALLER CITIES, TOWNS AND AMALGAMATED RURAL AREAS HAVE ELIMINATED PAPER BALLOTS, OFTEN FOR REASONS OF COST**
- **INCREASINGLY ADOPTED BY INDIGINEOUS COMMUNITIES (OVER 50 SO FAR), USUALLY FOR REFERENDUMS OR RATIFICATION VOTES.**

# **PUBLIC OPINION ON INTERNET VOTING**

- **DESPITE LOCAL INTERNET ELECTIONS, MOST CANADIANS HAVE NOT DONE IT, AND KNOW LITTLE ABOUT IT**
- **ATTITUDES LIKELY QUITE FLUID, AND COULD CHANGE DRAMATICALLY WITH EVENTS**
- **ELECTORAL REFORM USUALLY REQUIRES ATMOSPHERE OF DISCONTENT OR CRISIS: NOT PRESENT HERE.**

# Canadians should have the Option to Vote over the Internet in Federal Elections, CES, 2011 & 2015



# **Favourability to Internet Voting Option**

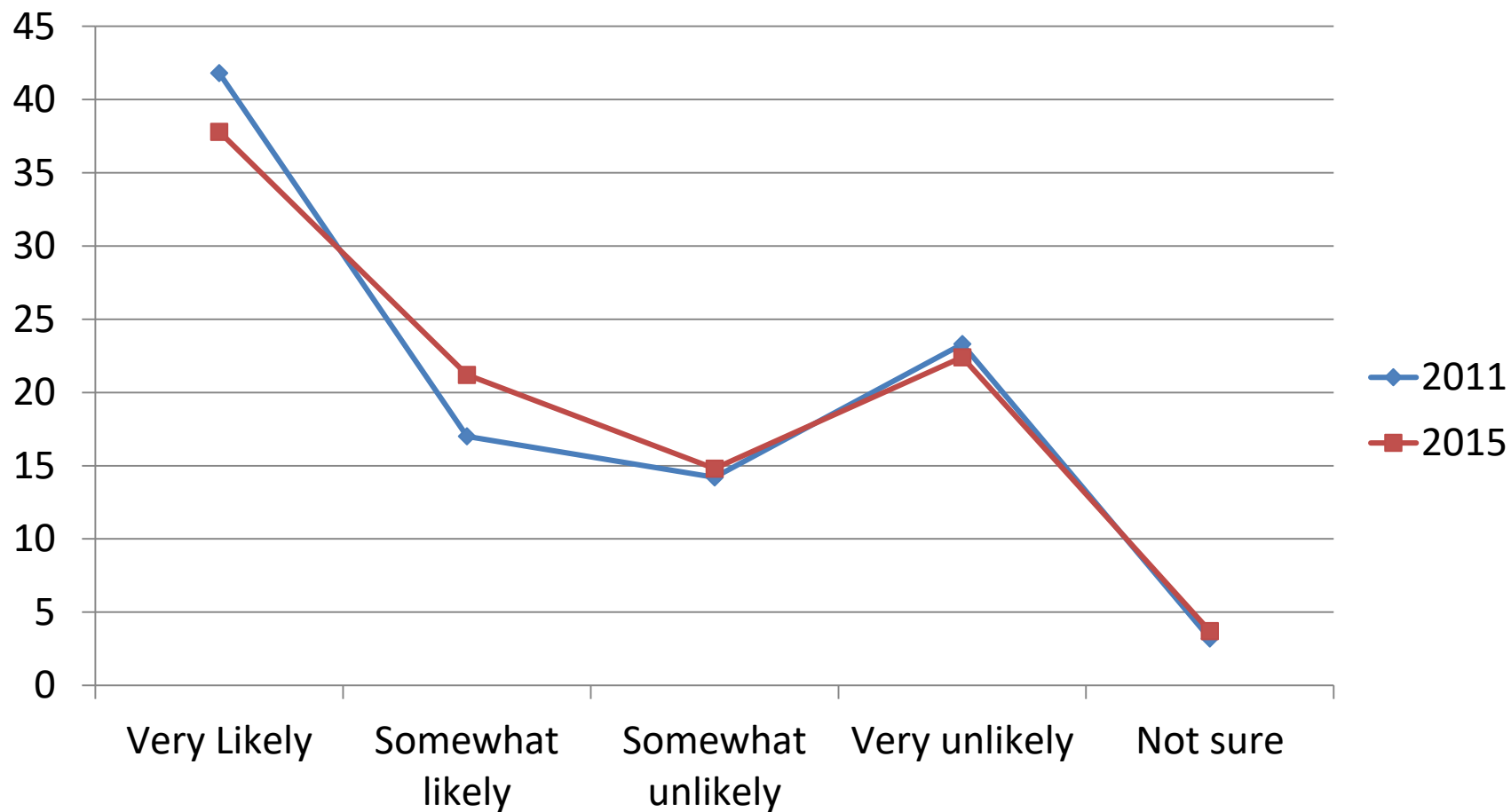
**Attitudes quite similar in 2011 and 2015**

**Slightly more agree than disagree.**

**Opinion less likely to be 'strong'.**

**Typical of hypothetical electoral reforms in non-crisis atmosphere**

# Likelihood of Voting over the internet, CES, 2011 & 2015



## Possible Usage

- **Over half of sample claims it is 'very' or 'somewhat' likely they would cast a vote over internet.**
- **Actual future behaviour very difficult to predict, but no doubt there is interest in the possibility.**
- **What do we make of the fact that more people say they would likely vote on the internet themselves than believe Canadians in general should have the option to do it?**



# A Mystery from the CES

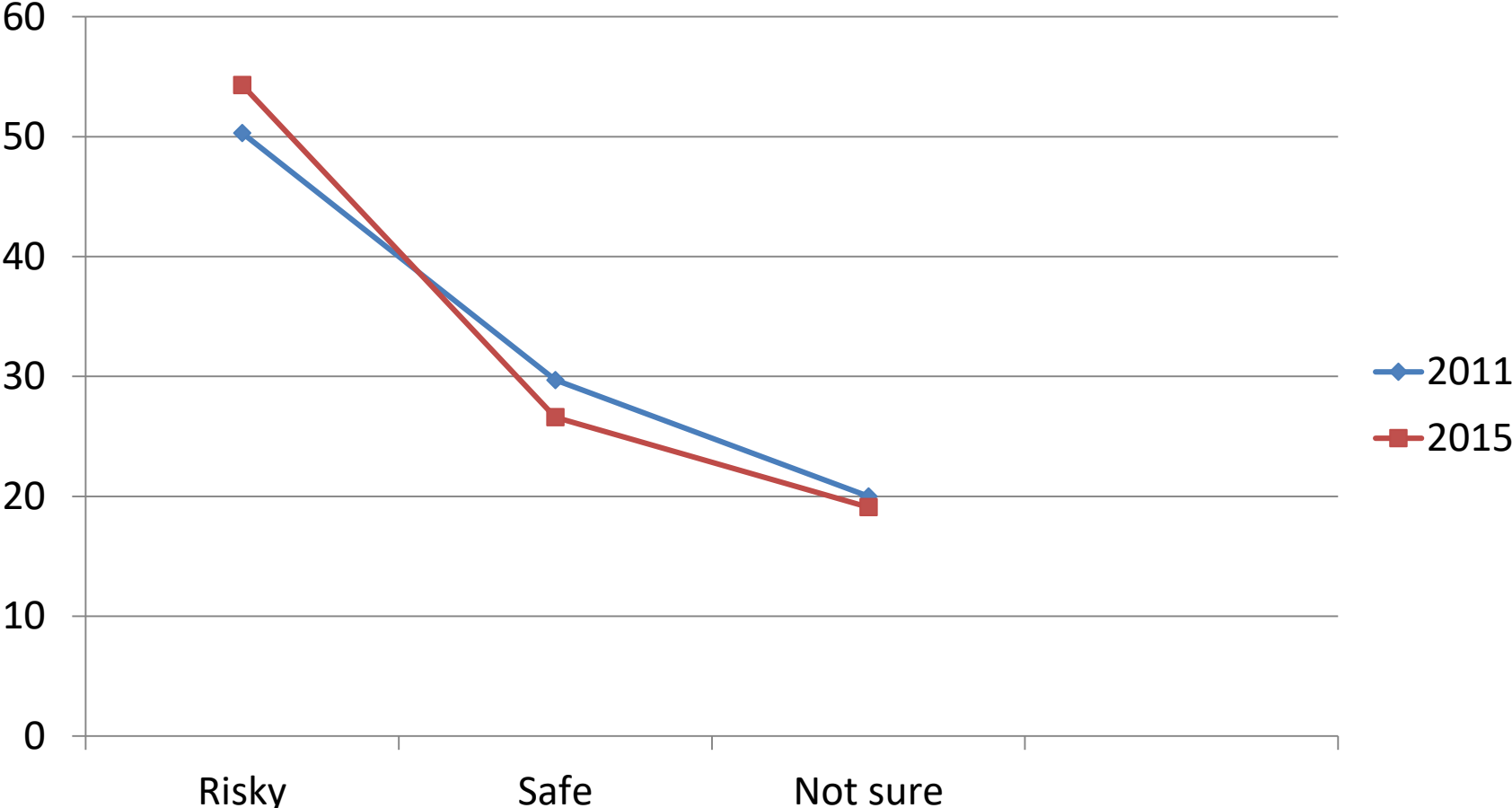
**Why do a number of people disagree with the option of internet voting but say they would be likely to use it themselves?**

	Very likely	Somewhat likely	Somewhat unlikely	Very unlikely	Not sure
Strongly Agree with option	81%	11	4	4	0
Agree	53%	29	10	6	2
Disagree	19%	17	26	33	4
Strongly Disagree	14%	13	11	60	3
Not sure	24%	25	19	20	12

# **Who say they would be likely to vote by internet themselves but do not favour Canadians in general having the option?**

- **They are more likely to be:**
  - **Younger**
  - **More educated**
  - **Very strong party identifiers**
  - **Conservatives**
- 
- **Likely feel other party supporters are less internet-savvy than they are. This pattern is found with conservative parties in some other countries.**

# Is Internet Voting risky?



# But how serious is the risk?

## Likelihood of Voting online, 2015 CES?

	Very Likely	Somewhat likely	Somewhat Unlikely	Very Unlikely
Voting over internet risky	20%	22	20	34
Voting over internet safe	73%	20	3	3
Not sure	39%	21	17	17
<b>N=1210</b>	V=.36	Tc=-.28	P<.000	

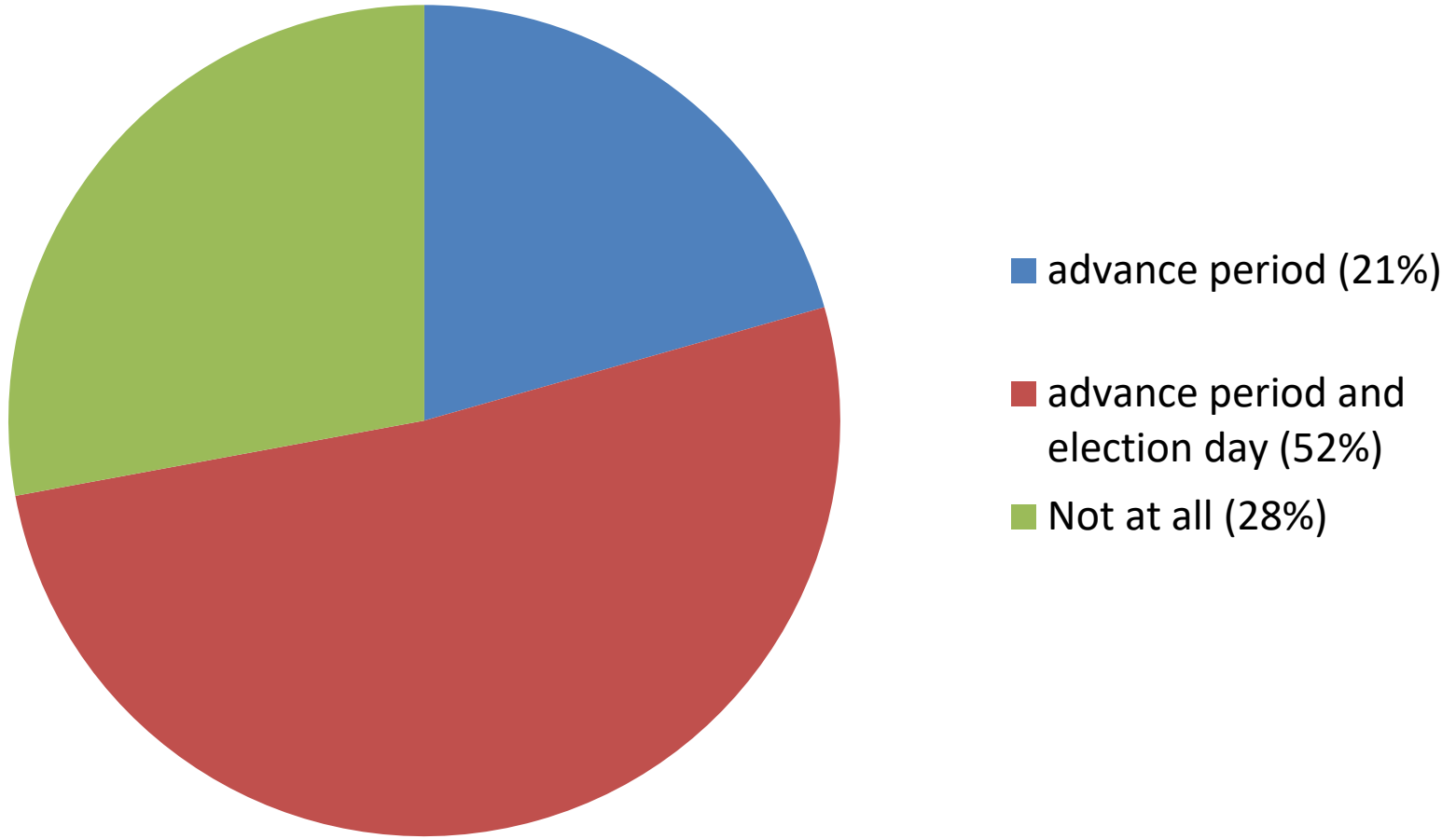
# The risky internet

- **Of those who think it is risky, 42% say they would be likely to use it to vote (anyway)**
- **Of those not sure, 60% would vote over the internet**
- **Virtually all of those who think it is safe would use it to vote**
  
- **Results very hypothetical, but indicate that though people are cautious about the internet, they are often prepared to use it (as with banking.)**

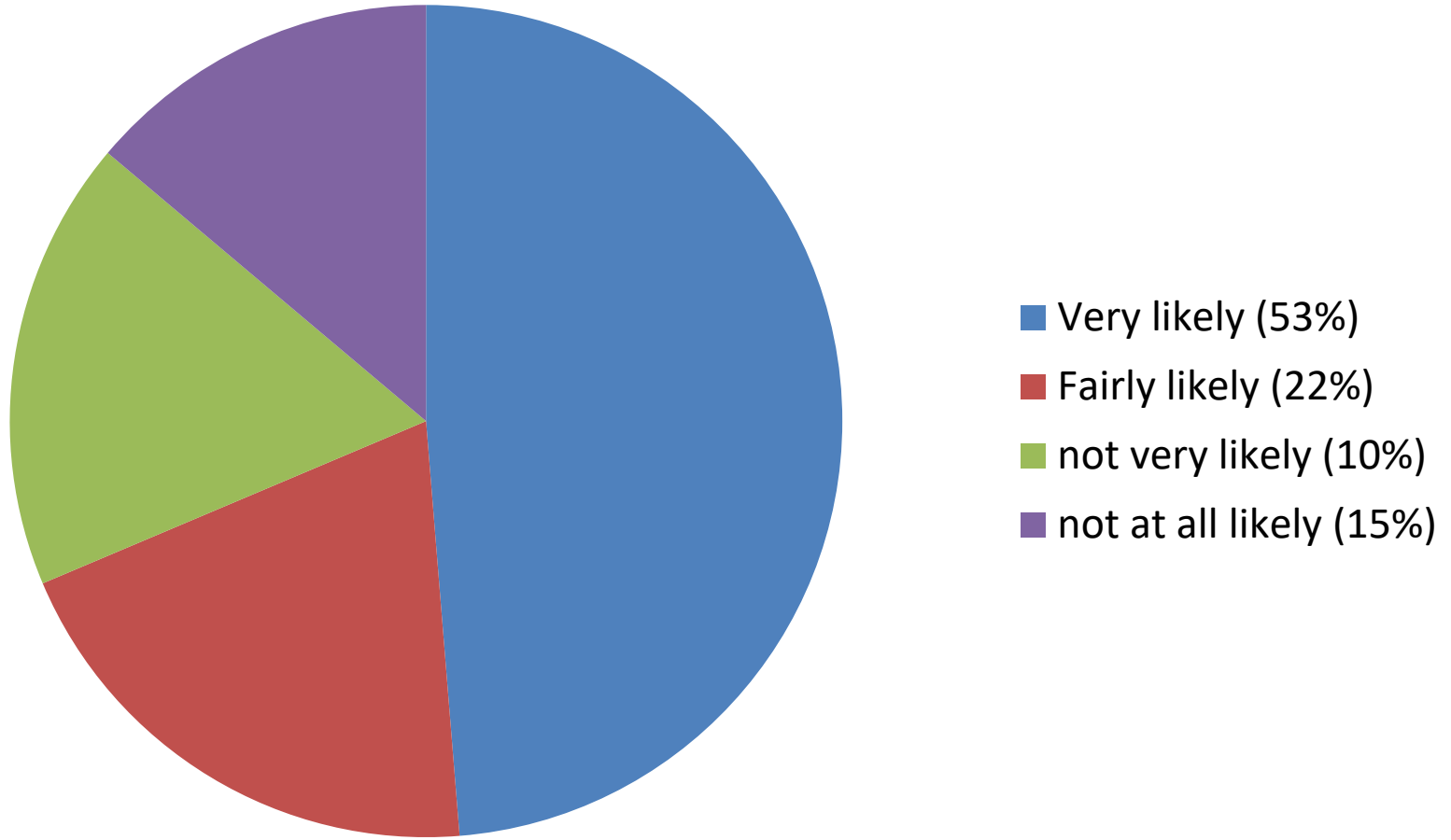
## **Results from National Survey, September 2016**

- **Survey conducted by Delvinia, as part of their regular Asking Canadians omnibus.**
- **National sample of 1000, matching Canadian population on gender, age and region.**
- **Internet panel, which agrees to fill out surveys (for small compensation) and is conversant with internet activity.**

**“In the next Federal Election, it has been suggested that voters should have the option of casting ballots online. In your opinion, should citizens be able to vote over the internet...”**



**“If the option of online voting were introduced for the 2019 Federal election, how likely would you be to cast your vote over the internet?”**

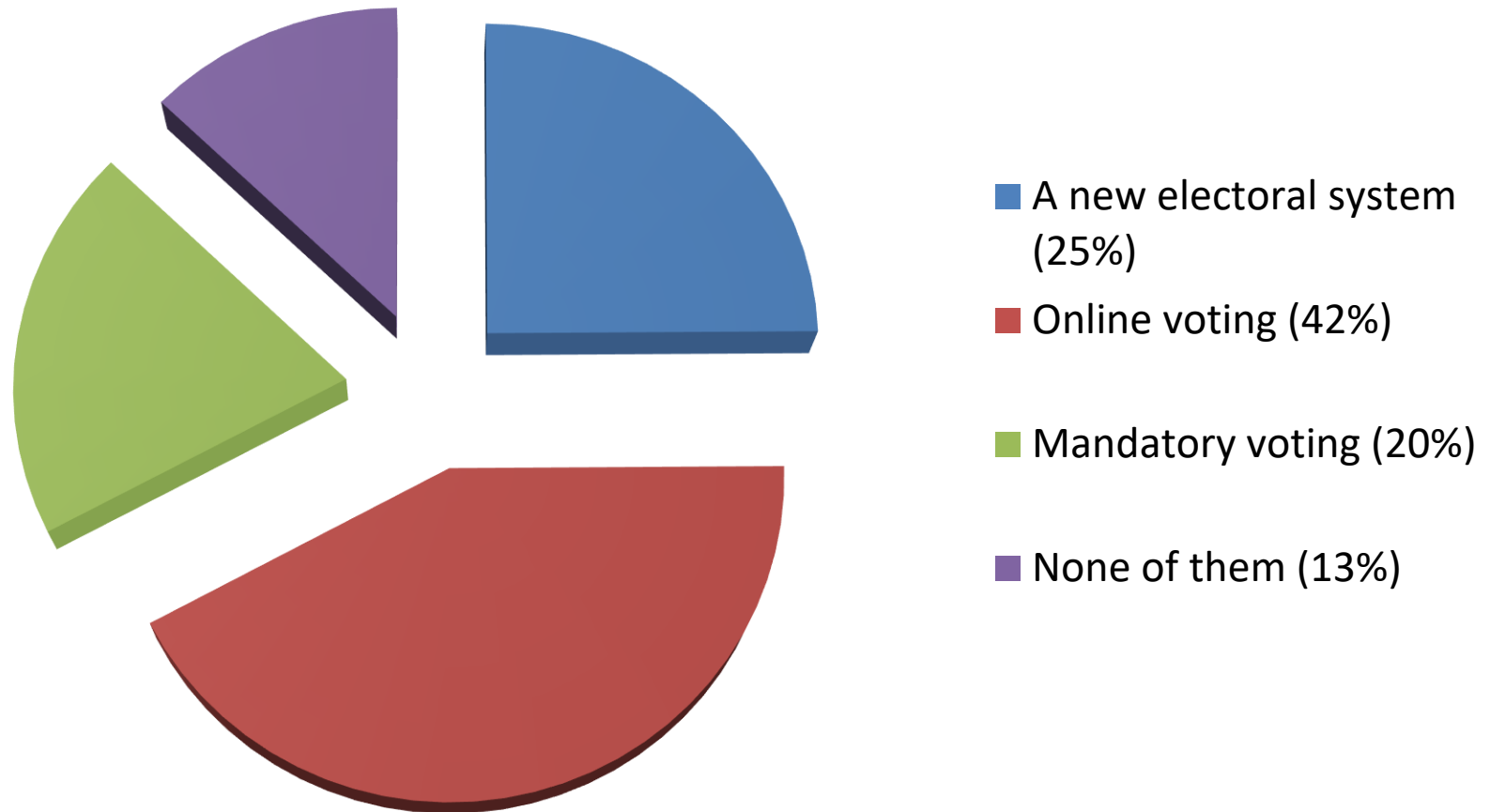




## **Overall Results**

- **Allowing for the fact that this is an internet-savvy group of people, the results express considerable approval of an internet voting option**
- **They also suggest such an option would be used, and not just in the advance voting period, if made available.**

**“Our Federal government is currently considering electoral reform. If you had to choose one, which reform would you prefer?”**



# **Online Voting as Electoral Reform**

- **Online voting appears the most popular change in a context of a number of proposals.**
- **It appears as an extension of opportunity to vote.**
- **Does not require, and does not exclude, any of the other proposed reforms.**

# **THE FATE OF CANADIAN ELECTORAL REFORM**

- **MOST DISCUSSION ABOUT ELECTORAL SYSTEM CHANGE, AND WHETHER REFERENDUM WOULD BE NEEDED TO RATIFY.**
- **AT ONE TIME, ELECTRONIC VOTING APPEARED AS POSSIBLE RECOMMENDATION.**
- **COMMITTEE RECOMMENDED AGAINST ELECTRONIC VOTING**
- **GOVERNMENT DECIDED NOT TO PROCEED WITH ANY ELECTORAL REFORM PROPOSALS.**